

ELEMENTARY ORCHESTRA & SUZUKI STRINGS Grades 1 - 5

WELCOME & WHAT TO DO NEXT

Welcome new and returning Orchestra and Suzuki families. I am glad you are here and I look forward to a great new year of music and can hardly wait to get started with lessons. Here is what happens next:

1) Purchase the appropriate level SUZUKI BOOK (1,2 etc) and RECORDING of those pieces (Download on itunes or CD) and enjoy listening to all the pieces you will be learning! Check local music stores or order online. Continuing students should listen to the next level well before they actually begin playing those pieces.

2) GET AN INSTRUMENT of the correct size for your child.

Most students will need to rent or buy an instrument through a music store. We do have a limited number of school owned instruments, for which we ask a fee of \$25, however the number of requests is more than we have available. Please take time to investigate finding a good value. Good quality instruments can be found through a variety of rental, lease, new or used options. On my pages on the Capitol Hill website is a "[Music Store List](#)" with a number of possible local and online sources. I suggest starting your search by comparing brand names in the various price ranges on several of these stores' sites. At local stores, ask for someone to play the instruments in different price ranges, for you to compare sound. Look for better quality strings like "Dominant", not all wire strings. Be sure the bow has real horsehair. Be wary of violin outfits under \$200, especially on non musical sites like Amazon. If you do buy through a mail order or any shop, be sure to ask specifically whether the instrument has a real carved bridge and if it is fully adjusted by hand before it is shipped.

3) LESSON TIMES

4th & 5th Grade lesson times will be set up by Mr. Middleton according to your experience and posted.

1st, 2nd & 3rd GRADE PARENTS are asked to attend lessons during the day if possible, so you can guide home practice. Please preview the time slots I have available for Grades 1 – 3 on my portion of the Capitol Hill website. Then beginning on Parent Information Night, **select a lesson time** by writing in preferred lesson times on the large poster I will have in the Orchestra Room. Up to 5 students share lesson times. Indicate your child's, grade and whether they are a beginner or continuing student, so we can try to match experience levels. You may wish to check how that fits with their child's classroom schedule. If there are several times which work for you, it helps me know that flexibility. After families have made their requests, we will adjust and confirm lesson times via email, phone calls and post the schedule on my site. If a 3rd graders parent cannot attend lessons, they may be placed in a group class, but I ask families to closely monitor practice and sign the practice guide each week.

4) A WORD ON COMMITMENT. Together, we adults maximize the opportunity for success by establishing a habit of practice 5 or more days per week, with parent assistance. This amount begins with 10 to 15 minutes during the first month as students develop the ability to focus mentally and physically to manage the instrument. After playing muscles have been trained, 20 to 30 minutes practice is expected 5 or more days per week. Students are excused from regular classes to attend lessons, but must be responsible to keep up with their regular class work, when they leave for this other important learning.

Thanks for all your patience and help in working out a schedule. Please look for Suzuki & Orchestra information and announcements on the Capitol Hill website under: "Classrooms" "Arts at Capitol Hill" "Mr. Middleton" I look forward to working with all of you, hearing about your musical experiences and helping you reach new levels of skill and enjoyment. All my best wishes!

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